

NAPWA

National Association
of People with AIDS

NAPWA works to ensure that the individual and collective needs of people living with HIV infection are being met on every level.

*A firm commitment in the battle against AIDS,
is something no American can take lightly.
Support and compassion
to those directly affected by this disease
deserve our utmost attention.*

*-- Belinda Mason
Presidential Appointee to the
National Commission on AIDS, and
President of NAPWA*

November 1, 1989

Dear Friend:

In 1983, a group of people living with AIDS met in Denver, CO, to discuss common problems and experiences. Through their meeting they come up with a set of proposals for a more humane and sensitive response to the crisis. These proposals became known as the Denver Principles, and brought together the need for a national response to the AIDS epidemic, thus the formation of **The National Association of People with AIDS (NAPWA)**. For three years the organization existed as a loosely affiliated network of PWAs active in local coalitions. As the epidemic grew, so did the number of PWAs committed to the Denver Principles and the mission of NAPWA.

Today, NAPWA is comprised of 102 affiliated People with AIDS chapters (PWA Coalitions) in the United States, Canada and Europe. Based on the philosophy of self-empowerment, PWA Coalitions strive to assume active roles in their communities. The individual coalition, through assessment of community needs, responds with appropriate recommendations and service programs.

At the national level, NAPWA maintains communication networks among coalitions, facilitating their development, exchange of ideas, experiences and programs. To promote the growth and expansion of the PWA Coalitions, NAPWA implemented these national service programs.

The National Speakers Bureau: NAPWA looks to amplify the local voice on a national level, promoting PWA involvement at all levels of the policy making process. It is the local experience brought to the national organization that provides NAPWA the ability to provide increased participation of articulate and informed PWAs to local and national forums addressing the HIV epidemic.

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Field Training and Coalition Building Program: To ensure the ongoing formation and development of PWA coalitions, NAPWA created a program designed to draw upon existing resources and expertise within NAPWA's national network of PWA coalitions. The end product of the Field Training and Coalition Building Program will be strengthened PWA coalitions and the compilation of a comprehensive series of model development programs. Based on case studies of seven geographically and developmentally diverse coalitions, the program includes: preliminary research on site evaluation of coalition progress; direct technical assistance and training; and, documentation of progress and success at the local level.

Centralized Information and Referral Services: Through the accumulation of various resources and information, NAPWA was still faced with the difficulty of developing a fast and efficient way of dissemination of information to its affiliated Coalitions. NAPWA's Centralized Information and Referral Services takes full advantage of the myriad of communications techniques at NAPWA's disposal. Such techniques encompass a toll free telephone system, telecommunications for the deaf, a facimilie system, an on-line computerized bulletin board system, a national database, resource and statistics pool, a variety of written publications targeting specific areas and topics, and a communications link to existing databases that contain information essential to the ongoing network needs of NAPWA Coalitions.

Yet, even with the implementation of these effective programs, NAPWA is faced with the largest burden of all -- **Direct Financial Support to the local PWA Coalition.** NAPWA affiliates, for the most part, struggle day to day with limited resources and typically small budgets. The majority of their services are operated by volunteers and office space is generally a desk and a phone in some small corner of a larger not-for-profit agency who provides space for little or no cost to the coalition. Still, even with limited resources, the PWA coalition manages to meet the needs of the community.

You can help! By supporting NAPWA, you support community based efforts of food banks, social service programs, housing, education, support groups and direct assistance to the person with AIDS. A tax deductible donation to the National Association of People with AIDS, means a direct contribution to your local community.

Your gift to the National Association of People with AIDS, ensures that the individual and collective needs of people living with HIV infection are met on every level. A pledge to NAPWA is a commitment in the battle against AIDS, a demonstration of support and compassion to those directly affected by HIV disease.

For your support, for your efforts, for your commitment, for your gift, you have my heartfelt thanks.

Sincerely,



Michael R. Merdian
Executive Director
NAPWA

Best Regards,



Derek T. Winans
Chairperson
Newark Community Project
For People With A.I.D.S.